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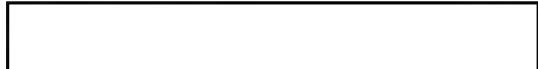
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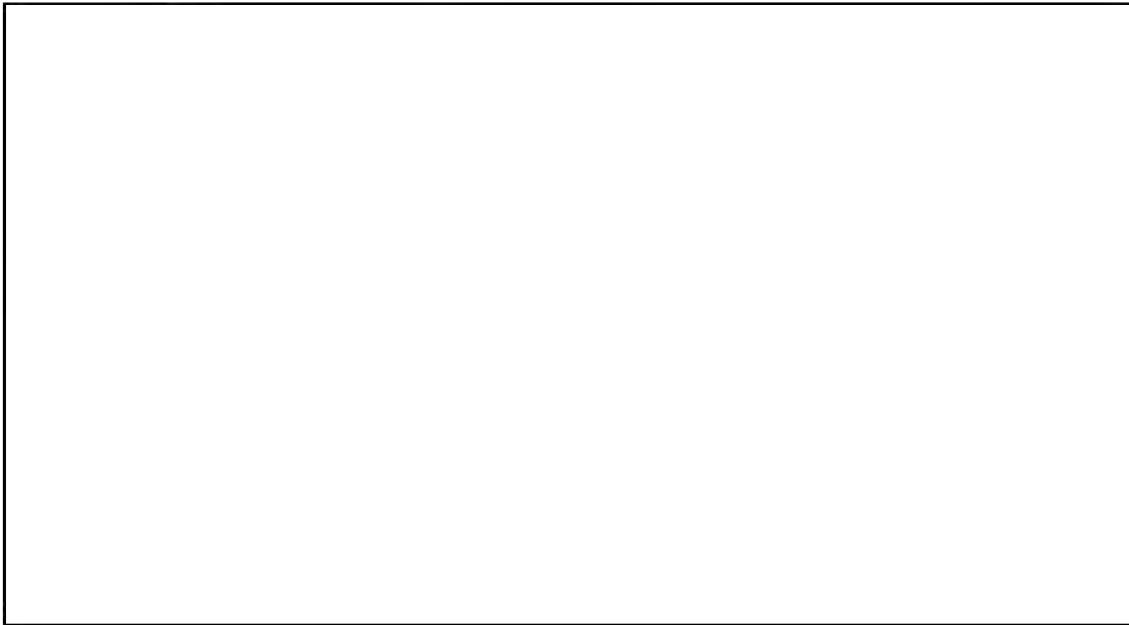
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Panama: The vote counting continues to favor Arias, but the government is still seeking a way to prevent his victory.

The National Elections Board, on which Arias' National Union has a six-to-four majority, disregarded the government-controlled Electoral Tribunal's decree prescribing the order in which provincial votes would be verified, and began the counting with populous Panama Province, where Arias apparently has a large margin over his opponent.

The US ambassador expects the Robles government to try to prevent or overrule any board action proclaiming Arias the victor. Although the board is authorized to announce the winner and grant his credentials, the tribunal could legally annul the board's findings and call for a new election.

The key determinant of the final outcome, however, still appears to be National Guard commandant Vallarino, whose agreement with Arias puts the government in a weak position to enforce its claims.

[Sporadic shooting between supporters of the two presidential candidates broke out last night near the offices of the National Elections Board. Several persons are said to have been wounded. The potential for similar outbreaks of violence remains high.]

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Colombia: The government has disrupted the Communist Party clandestine organization and has found indications of Soviet support for the party's subversive operations.

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Colombian security forces last week arrested six members of the party's clandestine apparatus and raided its publication and false documentation center. Equipment confiscated there was reportedly supplied by the USSR.

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President Lleras has been embarrassed by these indications of Soviet involvement but is reluctant publicly to blame the USSR, with which he resumed relations in January. Lleras' concern over adverse local political repercussions from leakage of the story is almost certainly behind information printed in Bogota newspapers on 21 May that the clandestine activities of recently arrested subversives were funded from Cuba via Mexico. The Soviet Union was not mentioned in the news account.

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NOTES

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Iran: The Shah seems confident he can extract \$1.04 billion in oil revenues from the consortium next year, having achieved only his "minimum" demands for 1968--reportedly \$865 million. If the consortium fails to produce the full amount, Iran will request oil from the consortium at the price used in intra-consortium deals; Iran will then sell or barter the oil in the US or East Europe to make up the difference. The Shah appears unworried about US oil import quotas and stated that Iran would use the planned Israeli pipeline as one method of moving oil to East Europe.

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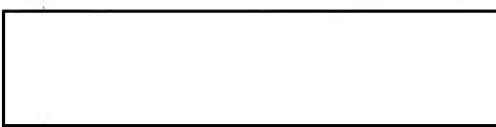
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